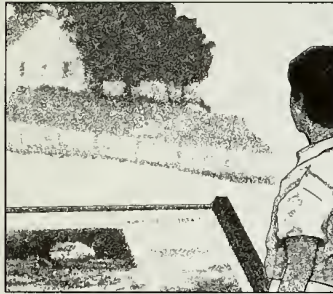


BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Interpretive Strategy



Interpretation is the Voice of the Resources

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PREFACE

This strategy clarifies and sets direction for BLM's interpretive program. It is based on *BLM's Interpretive Guidelines*, *Recreation 2000*, *Recreation 2000 Update*, the *BLM's Blue Print for the Future* and supports the Bureau of Land Management Strategy and the Government Performance Review Act. It will guide the development of effective interpretive programs which supports management goals, serves visitors and protects the public land resources.

Interpretation is a voice for all the resource management programs within the BLM. Although BLM has had some interpretive facilities, programs and products in place since the early 1970s, the program is relatively young. Red Rock National Conservation Area Visitor Center, completed in 1982, was one of BLM's first visitor centers. That same year, BLM established a partnership with its first interpretive cooperating association. Now the BLM is an active partner in 46 visitor centers, 18 of which BLM owns and manages.

In 1993, the BLM hired its first national lead for interpretive program. BLM's interpretive products have won many awards for the outstanding quality and creative approaches. Many BLM staff members served as officers or on committees in the interpretive professional organization, The National Association for Interpretation.

The BLM's interpretive program focuses on the Nation's public lands and the interrelationship between the physical elements, biological systems, cultural, and historical events. Management issues are addressed within the interpretive story in a way that relates those issues to the visitors experiences. Interpretive planning is done collaboratively with internal and external groups, and clear measurable objectives are established to measure the cost/benefit and the programs effectiveness. BLM's interpretive program aims to respect and serve people with diverse backgrounds and abilities.

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Mission Statement

The Bureau of Land Management interpretive program supports the Bureau's mission and goals by serving customers, promoting the health of the land, and enhancing the public's enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of public land's natural and cultural resources and its management.

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Guiding Theme for BLM's Interpretive Program:

The resources on public lands are an integral part in people's lives and BLM is working to protect the value of these resources for all generations.



The Bureau of Land Management Interpretive Program's

- I. Is thematic and uses accepted professional interpretive principles.
- II. Provides services for people of all abilities by using diverse media and combining techniques to reach different learning styles, abilities, generations, ethnic groups, and cultures.
- III. Serves visitors' needs and enhances their experience.
- IV. Incorporates appropriate safety and health considerations into planning, design, and content of interpretive services.
- V. Is evaluated to measure effectiveness of programs, services, facilities, and media for all audiences.

- VI. Supports agency initiatives, resource protection, and environmental ethics.
- VII. Encourages visitor involvement in activities and "hands-on" experiences that increase understanding of ecosystem management goals.
- VIII. Looks across administrative and geographic boundaries.
- IX. Employs effective planning processes.
- X. Addresses interpretive media choices based on the goals and objectives identified in BLM policies such as Recreation 2000, and the Visitor Center memorandum (IB 97-85).

Vision Statement

BLM's interpretive program fosters an appreciation for the resources and an understanding about the relationships between people and the public lands. Interpretation communicates how the BLM manages resources and provides opportunities for public use. As a result of BLM's interpretive program, the public will be more environmentally responsible while enjoying their public lands.

GOAL 1:

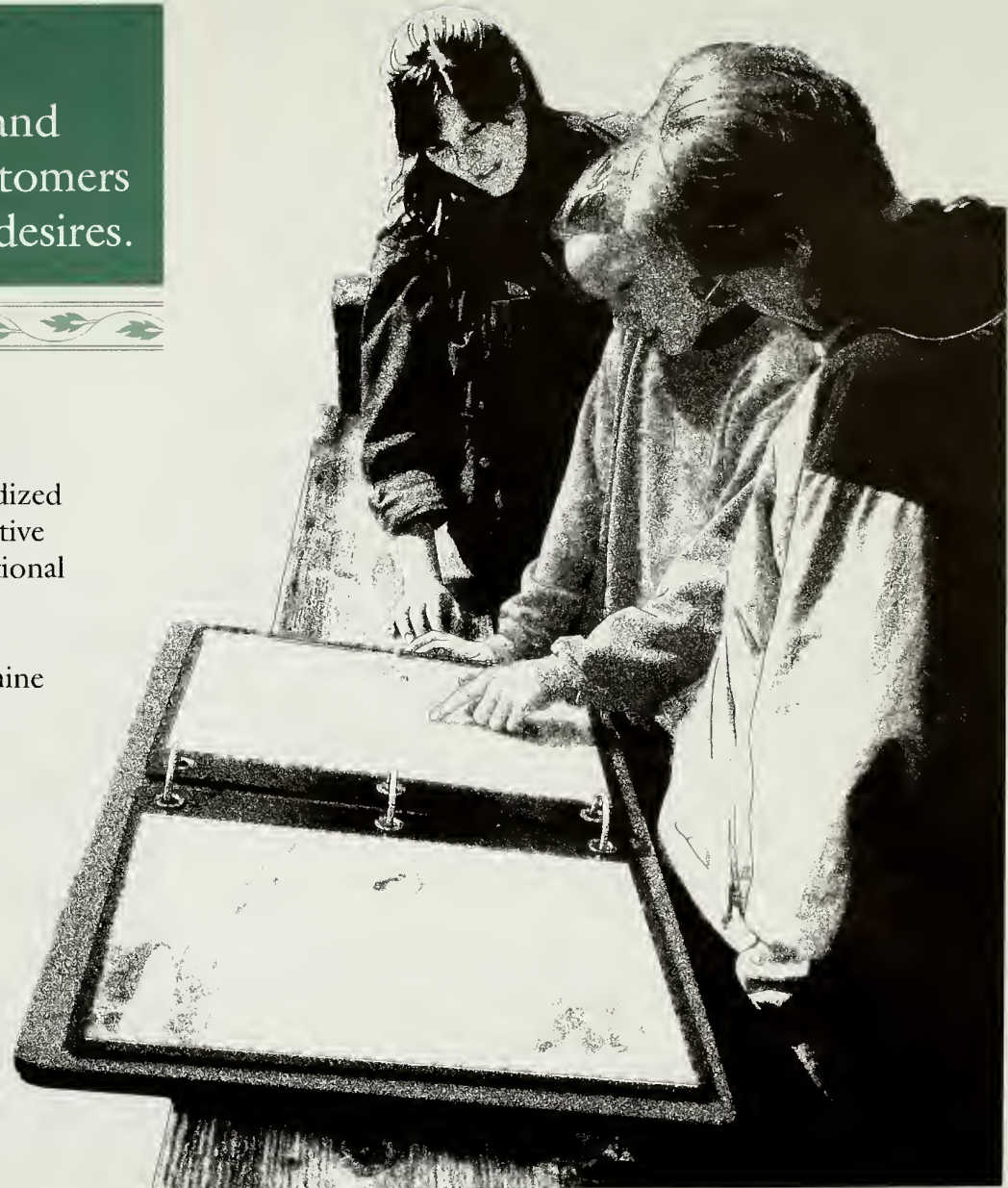
Working with user groups and partners, BLM will canvass customers to understand their needs and desires.

Actions:

- I. Develop a contract to implement standardized procedures to better evaluate the interpretive program relevance and effectiveness. (National Interpretive Lead, FY2002)
- II. Use tourism and customer data to determine trends and identify new audiences in interpretive planning. (All levels, ongoing)

"The visitor is unlikely to respond unless what you have to tell or show, touches his personal experience, thoughts, hopes, way of life, social position or whatever else."

Freeman Tilden, Interpreting Our Heritage



*"We must learn to live together as brothers
or perish together as fools."*

Martin Luther King, Jr.



GOAL 2:

BLM will provide interpretive opportunities to diverse audiences in a variety of settings using a variety of effective techniques.

Actions:

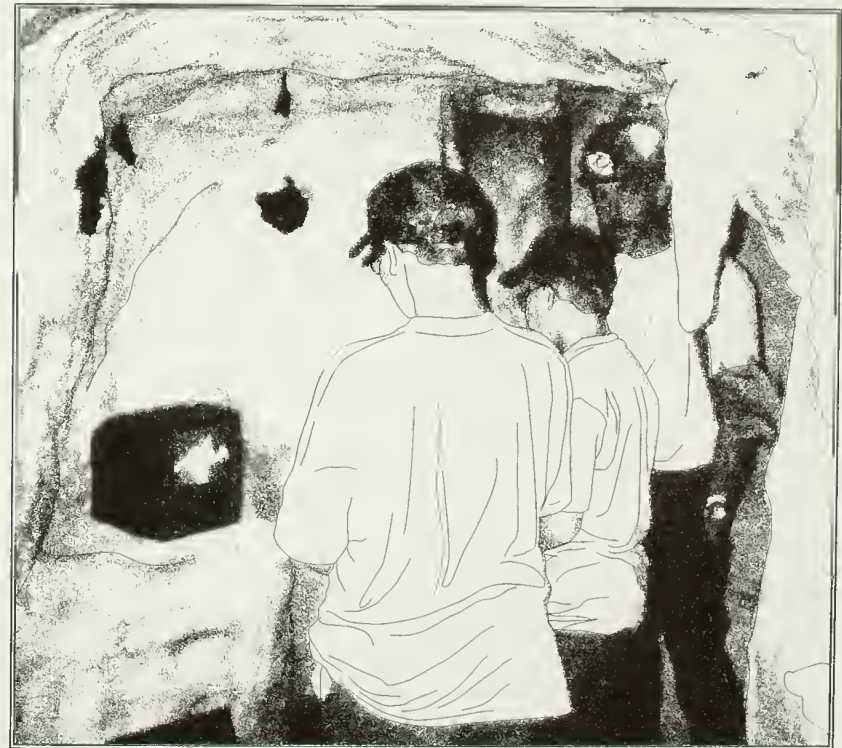
- I. Identify needs and opportunities to reach underrepresented audiences by working with professional organizations such as the National Association for Interpretation, the Association of Partners for Public Lands, and the North American Association for Environmental Education. (National and State Interpretive Leads, ongoing)
- II. During the planning process address methods for reaching diverse audiences. (All levels, ongoing)
- III. Distribute technical information on how to reach diverse audiences at least annually. (National Interpretive Lead and Accessibility Lead)

GOAL 3:

The BLM interpretive staff will collaborate with a diversity of internal and external constituents such as public affairs, the public rooms, chambers of commerce, outfitters, guides, and cooperating associations to provide basic and safety information about public lands.

"Interpretation is the revelation of a large truth that lies behind any statement of fact."

Freeman Tilden, Interpreting Our Heritage



Actions:

- I. Identify and compile basic information (safety, orientation, and recreational information) that should be provided to customers through appropriate media (web pages, public land information centers, administrative sites, visitor centers, cooperative sites/programs). (All levels, ongoing)
- II. Update basic public land information (All levels, ongoing).

GOAL 4:

Develop thematic interpretive services that promote and encourage public understanding of resource management goals, and the importance of resources to individuals and communities.

Actions:

- I. Provide interpretation to enhance appreciation, understanding, and protection of significant natural, cultural, and recreation resource values. (Field Offices, ongoing)
- II. On an annual basis identify opportunities to share information about programs that successfully help reduce resource damage or increase the public's support and understanding of public land resources and management programs. (National Interpretive Lead, FY 2000)
- III. Use interdisciplinary teams to identify local resource management issues to be addressed by local interpretive efforts. (All levels, ongoing)
- IV. Select interpretive media/techniques that minimize impacts and whenever possible, enhance the protection of the resources. (All levels, ongoing)
- V. Include interpretation in all BLM land management plans. (All levels, ongoing)



*"Interpretation should
capitalize mere curiosity
for the enrichment
of the human mind
and spirit."*

Freeman Tilden,
Interpreting Our Heritage

Goal 5:

Expand collaboration between BLM's interpretation and environmental education (EE) programs.

Actions:

- I. Identify opportunities and develop specific goals to cooperate on national level initiatives, priorities, and programs such as the national weeds initiative, Leave No Trace and BLM's Wilderness program. (National Interpretive and Environmental Education Leads, ongoing)
- II. Whenever possible the interpretive and EE programs should be in the same organizational group. (All levels, ongoing)

*"One's mind,
once stretched by a new idea,
never regains its original dimensions."*

Oliver Wendell Holmes



GOAL 6:

Foster partnerships with other agencies, cooperating associations and friends groups to achieve mutual interpretive goals.

"People are out for recreation and need restful, intellectual visions, and not dull, dry facts."

Enos Mills, Adventures of a nature guide and essays in interpretation



Actions:

- I. Continue interagency cooperation and national level partnerships through participation in the Federal Interagency Council for Interpretation, the National Association for Interpretation, the Association for Partners for Public Lands, the American Recreation Coalition, and other organizations. (National Interpretive Lead, ongoing)
- II. Identify opportunities to increase outreach programs and internal sharing mechanisms. (National Interpretive Lead, ongoing)
- III. Identify ways to increase BLM's interpretive services through cooperative efforts with other public agencies, cooperating associations, outfitters and guides, concessionaires, and other government and non-government organizations. (All levels, ongoing)
- IV. Highlight successful interpretive partnerships in the annual interpretive report. (All levels, ongoing)

GOAL 7:

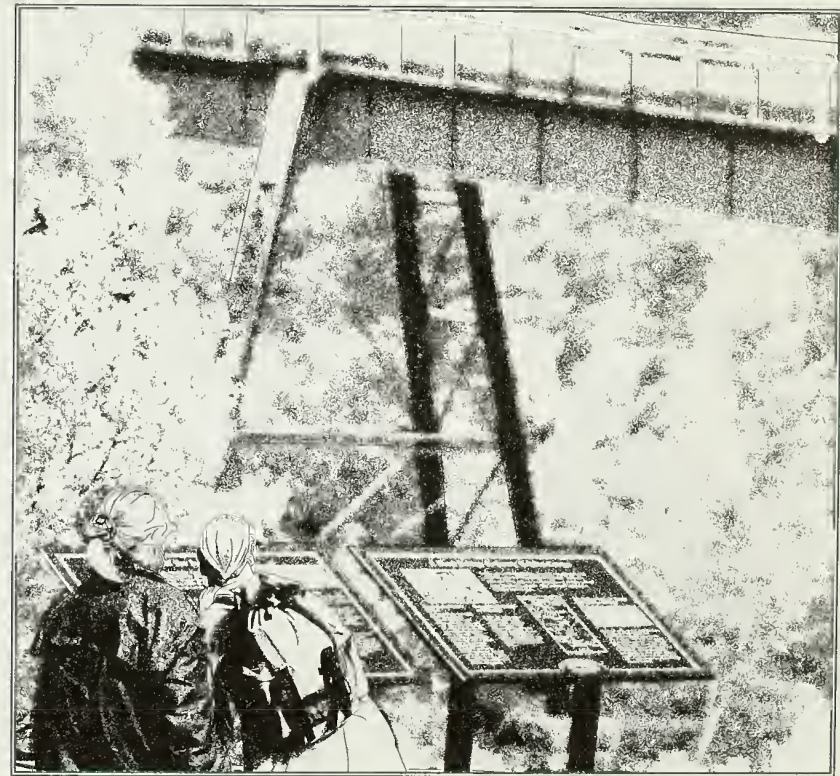
Demonstrate the role of interpretation to meet agency goals by using accountability and evaluation practices.

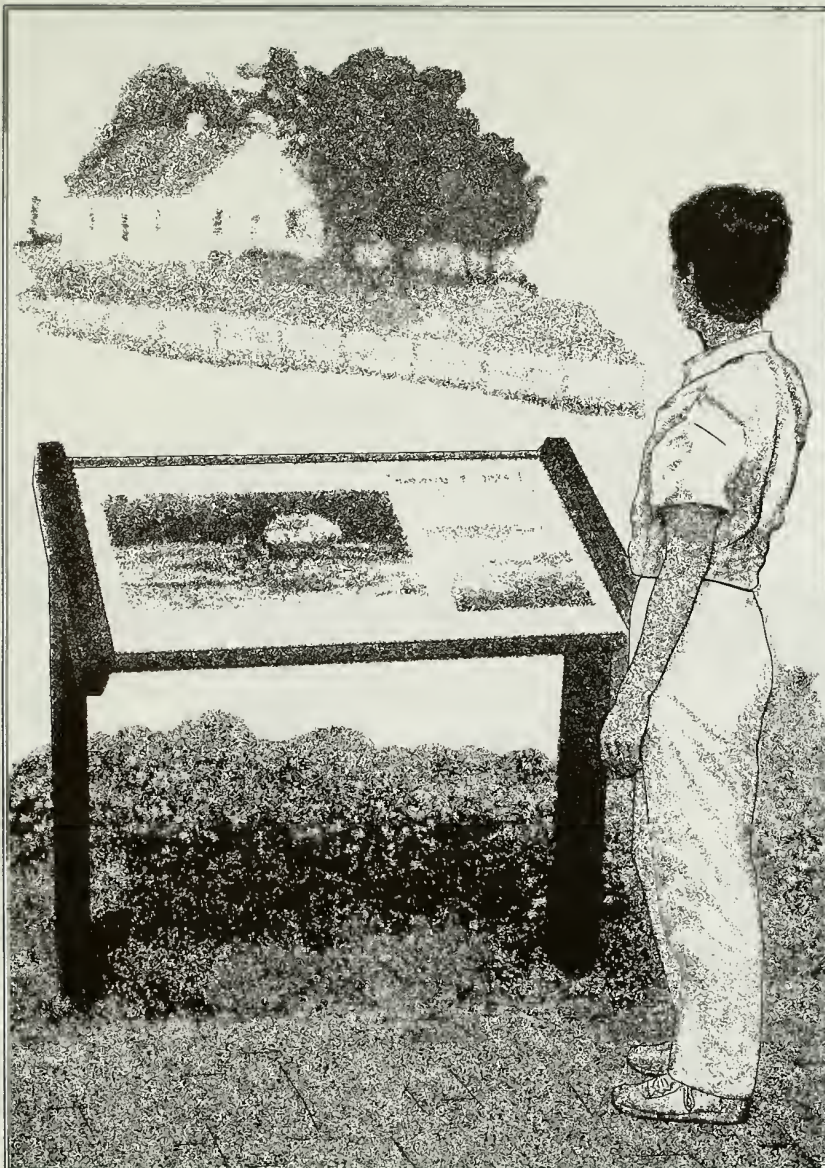
Actions:

- I. Establish budget processes to increase interpretation visibility and accountability. (National Interpretive Lead & Budget Office, FY2000)
- II. At least twice a year keep BLM employees informed of the latest technology and developments that will result in cost effective interpretation and enhanced customer service. (National and State Interpretive Leads, ongoing)
- III. Identify and maintain accurate databases on interpretive projects and facilities in the Recreation Management Information System (RMIS) and the Facilities Inventory Maintenance Management System (FIMMS). (National Interpretive Lead, FY2001)
- IV. Submit interpretive accomplishments to be included in the annual BLM report. (National Interpretive Lead, ongoing)
- V. Develop criteria and procedures for evaluating interpretive partnerships. (National Interpretive Lead FY2002)

"We aim above the mark to hit the mark."

Ralph Waldo Emerson





GOAL 8:

Increase involvement of BLM staff
at all levels of the agency
and across disciplines in identification
of interpretive priorities.

Actions:

- I. Prepare an annual implementation plan each September that will identify the national priorities to be accomplished for the year. (National Interpretive Lead, ongoing)
- II. Prepare an annual report each September on BLM's interpretive program accomplishments for the year. (National and State Interpretive Leads, ongoing)
- III. Conduct annual interpretive meetings that involve people from various BLM disciplines. (National Interpretive Lead, ongoing)
- IV. Give interpretive updates at state recreation meetings. (National Interpretive Lead, ongoing)

GOAL 9:

Incorporate interpretation into the budget process.

Actions:

- I. Track interpretive accomplishments through the budget process on an annual basis. (National Interpretive Lead, FY2000)
- II. Work with national BLM budget staff to increase annual funding for interpretation. (National Interpretive Lead, ongoing)

*"The whole art of teaching
is only the art of awakening
the natural curiosity of young minds
for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards."*

Anatole France



*"I hear and I forget.
I see and I remember.
I do and I understand."*

Confucius



GOAL 10:

Leverage BLM funding and in-kind contributions to help achieve management and interpretive goals.

Actions:

- I. Use existing databases, grant coordinators and partners to identify alternative and supplemental funding sources for interpretation projects. (All levels, ongoing)
- II. Identify key sources of funding (resource activities/subactivities, fee demonstration, challenge cost share) and incorporate them into the annual directives. (National and State Interpretive Leads, ongoing)

GOAL 11:

Provide professional training and development opportunities for staff and management, especially those who implement interpretive programs and develop partnerships, to increase skills and competency within the organization.

Actions:

- I. Create and distribute interpretive reference materials, self study training materials, and project examples to field personnel. (National Interpretive Lead, annually)
- II. Coordinate with National Training Center (NTC) to assess training needs in interpretation, (National Interpretive Lead, biannual basis)
- III. Expand the use of interagency training. (National Lead and State Interpretive Leads, ongoing)
- IV. Work with NTC to incorporate interpretation into other resource training programs. (National Interpretive Lead, ongoing)
- V. Identify people to serve as mentors and help train other staff. (National and State Interpretive Leads, ongoing)
- VI. Distribute information on visitor assessment techniques for the interpretive planning effort. (National Interpretive Lead, FY2000)
- VII. Expand institutional memberships and encourage individual memberships in professional organizations (i.e., National Association for Interpretation, North American Association for Environmental Education). (All levels, ongoing)
- VIII. Encourage attendance at interpretive training. (National and State Interpretive Leads, ongoing)
- IX. Encourage BLM interpreters to obtain professional certification from the National Association for Interpretation. (National and State Interpretive Leads, ongoing)

"Wisdom begins in wonder."

Socrates

*"A good listener tries to understand thoroughly
what the other person is saying.
In the end he may disagree sharply,
but before he disagrees, he wants to know exactly
what it is he is disagreeing with."*

Kenneth A. Wells, Guide to Good Leadership



Goal 12:

Provide an organizational framework
that supports interpretation at
all levels of the organization.

Actions:

- I. Provide model job descriptions and performance criteria (to supervisors and managers) for positions with interpretive duties at the State Office and Field Office level. (National Interpretive Lead, ongoing)
- II. Encourage each State Director to have a state lead for interpretation who is qualified and active in the profession and dedicates at least 50% of his/her time to interpretation. (National Interpretation Lead and National Group Lead for Recreation, FY 2000)
- III. Evaluate vacant positions as potential interpretive positions when a need for interpretive expertise exists. (State Interpretive Leads, ongoing)
- IV. Establish an internal networking system across disciplines within BLM for people involved in interpretation. (National and State Interpretive Leads, ongoing)

GOAL 13:

Increase the visibility of interpretation as a tool for accomplishing BLM's mission and goals.

Actions:

- I. Prepare articles for *People, Land and Water*, non-government agencies' newsletters, for public media and professional publications highlighting effective interpretation. (National and State Interpretive Leads, ongoing)
- II. Identify a champion for interpretation from the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and Field Committee. (National Interpretation Lead and National Group Leader for Recreation, FY2000)
- III. Use BLM web sites (e.g. National Internet, Recreation.gov, Environmental Education and Recreation Home Pages) to show the diversity and accomplishments of interpretive programs. (National Interpretive Lead, FY 2000)
- IV. Encourage BLM staff to nominate for national awards BLM managers and field staff who support interpretative efforts. (National Interpretive Lead, ongoing)
- V. Encourage BLM participation in national awards programs such as the National Association for Interpretation media competition, BLM Excellence in Interpretation and EE, and partnership awards through Association of Partners for Public Lands. (National and State Interpretive Leads, ongoing)
- VI. Encourage field offices to publicize their interpretive opportunities. (National and State Interpretive Leads, ongoing)
- VII. Develop a traveling exhibit that highlights BLM interpretive programs and accomplishments, for use at conferences and meetings of organizations such as the National Association for Interpretation, and the North American Association for Environmental Education. (Team from all levels of the organization, FY2000)

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*"There is a single light of science,
and to brighten it anywhere
is to brighten it everywhere."*

Isaac Asimov

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